

# **Chiefs and Sheriffs Survey**

## **Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control**

### **April 2004**

#### **Who did we survey?**

For the second time in two years, law enforcement professionals consisting of Chiefs and Sheriffs across the State of Virginia were surveyed. There were a total of 301 surveys distributed (178 to Chiefs and 123 to Sheriffs). Out of the 301 surveys distributed, 189 surveys were returned for a response rate of 63%. This response rate is up from 53% in 2002. The demographics of Chiefs and Sheriffs that responded include: 39% counties; 37% cities and 23% townships. The respondents were further categorized into state regions, that included: 25% Southwest; 21% Central; 17% Southside; 15% Tidewater; 13% Northern and 9% Valley.

#### **The survey of law enforcement constituents assesses the following:**

- Attitudes relating to the severity of drunk driving offenses, underage purchase of alcohol/tobacco and illegal activity of ABC licensed/unlicensed establishments.
- The type, frequency and quality of contact law enforcement professionals have with ABC Special Agents.
- Awareness of ABC education training initiatives and website tools.
- Awareness of ABC mandates relating to license application notification and administrative charges.
- Overall satisfaction and favorability of ABC's enforcement services.

#### **Survey Highlights**

The 2004 survey results were virtually invariable in comparison with 2002 results.

#### ***Public Safety***

- Drunk-driving offenses continue to be a serious issue in jurisdictions across the state as compared with 2002 survey results.
- The underage buying of alcohol and tobacco remain moderately serious problems in a majority of Virginia jurisdictions according to law enforcement professionals.
- Illegal activities at ABC licensed and unlicensed establishments (i.e. Nip Joints, Shot Houses) were viewed overall as either not too or not at all serious issues in Virginia jurisdictions.

#### ***Customer Service***

- Respondents (83%) are aware of the ABC Agent(s) assigned to their perspective jurisdictions and have made contact with them primarily regarding license applications (79%); illegal alcohol activity (78%) and to request the assistance of ABC Special Agents (78%).
- In the past 12-months, law enforcement professionals have made contact with ABC Special Agents most frequently on a monthly basis and strongly agreed that the quality of that contact was professional, timely and handled in accordance with expectations.
- ABC Web site usage is up 5 percentage points from 2002. Respondents indicated that they have used the Web site tools primarily to obtain grant information (77%) and to obtain educational information on responsible selling and serving of alcohol (71%).

### Satisfaction

- Overall, law enforcement constituents are somewhat to very satisfied (81%) with the manner in which ABC regulates Virginia alcohol laws.
- Respondents indicated that the enforcement services provided by ABC are somewhat to very beneficial (83%) to their respective jurisdictions.

### What we do well

- ABC Enforcement proactively informs local law enforcement personnel of potential issues and problems.
- A large percentage (83%) of law enforcement personnel at least know the special agent assigned to their respective jurisdictions, which would indicate open communication between the two groups.
- As mandated by state law, 75% of respondents are routinely notified of applications for liquor licenses by ABC enforcement.
- Most often, ABC agents act professionally and respond in a timely manner whenever contacted by local law enforcement for any type of assistance.

### Areas of opportunity for improvement

- More frequent contact with law enforcement personnel in *smaller* jurisdictions is warranted. At present 51% of townships have contact with ABC twice a year or not at all, while 70% of cities reported having contact on a weekly to monthly basis and 82% of counties have more varied contact of twice per year to weekly.
- 76% of respondents are not totally familiar with the process for pursuing administrative charges when a licensed establishment is discovered violating the law and therefore, initiatives to explain the process should be instituted.
- In an effort to heighten awareness and encourage usage of enforcements education, prevention and training activities, specifically, agents speaking at community events about ABC laws and ABC statutes and regulations training; better marketing of these services is necessary.
- Market and encourage Web site usage for filing complaints, obtaining agency contact information, licensee searches and any other services that could potentially exceed customer expectations.

**Chiefs and Sheriffs Survey 2004**  
**N=189**

**NOTE:** Percentages are calculated based on the actual number that responded to each question.

**To what degree are drunk-driving offenses a problem in your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Serious	25%	23%
Somewhat Serious	58%	64%
Not too Serious	14%	12%
Not at all Serious	2%	1%

**To what degree is underage buying of alcohol a problem in your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Serious	20%	17%
Somewhat Serious	52%	65%
Not too Serious	25%	17%
Not at all Serious	3%	1%

**To what degree is underage buying of tobacco a problem in your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Serious	16%	17%
Somewhat Serious	48%	54%
Not too Serious	32%	29%
Not at all Serious	5%	0

**How serious of a problem is illegal activity at ABC licensed establishments in your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Serious	4%	8%
Somewhat Serious	27%	29%
Not too Serious	58%	50%
Not at all Serious	11%	14%

**How serious of a problem are unlicensed establishments (i.e. Nip Joints, Shot Houses) in your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>
Very Serious	2%
Somewhat Serious	10%
Not too Serious	36%
Not at all Serious	51%

**Do you know the ABC Special Agent(s) assigned to your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Yes	83%	86%
No	17%	14%

**Do you know the ABC Regional Supervisors (SAC or ASAC) responsible for your jurisdiction?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Yes	46%	47%
No	54%	53%

**During the past 12-months, has your department had contact with:**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
ABC Special Agents only	56%	45%
ABC Supervisors (SACS,ASACS) only	2%	0%
Both	24%	42%
Neither	19%	13%

**How frequently does your department have contact with ABC, either by telephone, in person or email?**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Weekly	20%	23%
Monthly	25%	33%
Quarterly	16%	18%
More than Quarterly	N/A	15%
Semi-Annually	13%	N/A
Annually	9%	N/A
No Contact	17%	11%

**What were the reasons for the contacts with ABC?**

	<b>2004</b>		<b>2002</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
ABC license application related	79%	21%	78%	22%
ABC licensee related	65%	35%	77%	23%
ABC store related	17%	83%	14%	86%
Illegal alcohol activity	78%	22%	89%	11%
Drug task force operation or investigation	47%	53%	44%	56%
ABC requested local office assistance	39%	61%	57%	43%
Local request for ABC agent assistance	78%	22%	78%	22%
Underage buying of alcohol	69%	31%	80%	20%
Underage tobacco purchase	36%	64%	45%	55%
Prevention or educational issues	29%	71%	27%	73%
ABC requested local equipment	8%	92%	10%	90%
Local request for ABC equipment	13%	87%	19%	81%
Joint investigations	64%	36%	74%	26%
Other criminal activity or investigation	51%	49%	52%	48%

Please rate the overall quality of the contact with Special Agents, SACS or ASACS.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002
ABC Agent acted professionally	68%	69%	25%	26%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%
ABC Agent responded in a timely manner	60%	58%	26%	32%	8%	4%	3%	1%	3%	4%
ABC Agent addressed problems according to your expectations	59%	51%	26%	35%	8%	9%	3%	2%	4%	3%
ABC Agent provided requested services	59%	59%	26%	28%	9%	7%	3%	1%	3%	4%

Are you aware of the following ABC education, prevention and training initiatives?

	2004			2002		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seller/Server training for licensees	42%	44%	14%	45%	41%	15%
Brochures related to the law and selling & serving responsibly	62%	24%	14%	58%	30%	12%
Do no sell stickers/Date Decals	55%	30%	15%	48%	35%	17%
Publications for parents and teens about alcohol laws	53%	31%	16%	50%	35%	15%
Agents speaking at community events regarding ABC laws	39%	40%	21%	44%	38%	17%
ABC statutes and regulations training	46%	37%	16%	48%	37%	15%
Materials and publications on ABC statutes	60%	26%	14%	57%	32%	12%

Have you ever used the ABC Web site [www.abc.state.va.us](http://www.abc.state.va.us) to access information?

	2004	2002
Yes	17%	12%
No	83%	88%

What information have you accessed using the ABC Web site?

	2004		2002	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
File formal complaints	9%	91%	N/A	N/A
Licensee search	32%	68%	4%	96%
Tools to prevent underage sales	56%	44%	9%	91%
Grant information and applications	77%	23%	7%	93%
Store locations	18%	82%	2%	98%
Agency contact information	48%	52%	12%	88%
Educational information on responsible selling and serving	71%	29%	4%	96%

**Does ABC routinely notify your department of license applications made in your jurisdiction?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>2004</b>
Always	49%
Frequently	26%
Seldom	11%
Never	16%

**Are you familiar with the process for pursuing administrative charges when you discover a licensed establishment violating the law?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Familiar	24%	26%
Somewhat Familiar	41%	43%
Not too Familiar	23%	19%
Not at all Familiar	12%	11%

**How satisfied are you with ABC in regulating ABC licensed establishments in your jurisdiction?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Satisfied	47%	54%
Somewhat Satisfied	34%	36%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	8%	8%
Very Dissatisfied	3%	1%
Don't Know	8%	N/A

**Overall, does your agency consider ABC enforcement services beneficial to your jurisdiction?**

<b>Responses s</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>
Very Beneficial	60%	68%
Somewhat Beneficial	23%	24%
Not too Beneficial	7%	5%
Not at all Beneficial	4%	2%
Don't Know	5%	N/A

## 2004 Chiefs and Sheriffs Survey Comments

Survey comments are segmented into the following categories based on patterns in the content: *Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, Funding/Staffing Issues, Areas of Opportunity for Improvement and Other.*

### Satisfaction

- Very satisfied with relationship with ABC
- The ABC Special Agents I work with are great, no complaints, just praise!
- VABC is an important component of our law enforcement team. I appreciate all of their efforts in supporting my community.
- Special Agent Romans has always been very helpful when contacted. He makes you think that the issues you are dealing with are important to him.
- Rob is an outstanding Agent for our area...We have worked well together for years. He also helps out with technology.
- Very good relationship with ABC personnel-Sheriff Fred Newman Washington County.
- ABC agents do an outstanding job for us in town of Timberville.
- We have always had a good relationship with ABC.
- For our jurisdiction, the response and service of the personnel from ABC has been outstanding.
- I am very satisfied with how things are handled in my jurisdiction.
- This is not a full service Sheriff's office and we do not routinely get involved in offenses where alcohol is involved. I do know people who own/operate establishments that serve alcohol and the reputation of local ABC personnel is excellent. Sheriff Bob Deed... Williamsburg-James City Sheriffs office.
- Our agent, Leonard Vess does an excellent job for this jurisdiction.
- I am very please with the agents assigned to our area.
- I have only been in office since 1/1/04. The agent for this area paid a visit and informed me of support I could receive from ABC-I appreciate his visit.
- We are very appreciative of the assistance provided by the ABC and especially our agent Bev. Whitmer.
- Always appreciate assistance.
- New agent in our area. Have contacted once and he was very helpful.
- I based my responses on the past years. But there was a young ABC officer that helped in a case here several months ago. Agent Baffato that did a great job. Worked with the Sheriffs office and Commonwealth to put together a case. Hopefully looking forward to working with this officer again. Sheriff S.B. Zeman, Floyd County.
- Agent Kirkland is doing a fine job! Sheriff Fox.
- Agent Mark Scott does a great job making us aware of problems. He works with us when we have extra events.
- In Arlington County we have enjoyed a productive and proactive team approach with our ABC agents. ABC agents have been a key component in our community policing efforts and we look forward to working with them closely in our future endeavors.
- We feel that ABC should be left as is at this time...No changes.

### Dissatisfaction

- We have been very dissatisfied w/the agent assigned to our area. While he regularly visits, he demonstrates little interest in working on cases and being proactive in any way. He is a nice guy w/little demonstrated work ethic
- The last 2 incidents my office made the arrests and broke up the parties of underage drinking. ABC was called but no one responded.

### Funding/Staffing Issues

- ABC, like most L.E. Agencies is drastically under-staffed, but they do an excellent job with the resources they have.
- Funding seems to be the primary reason ABC agents are not very active in my locality.
- There are not enough agents. Our agent responds as quickly as he can, however, they have a very large backlog. Your agent stops by occasionally.
- Have a new agent in area and I have no idea who he is.

### Areas of Opportunity for Improvement

- Agents should meet with local Chief/Sheriff at least annually.
- ABC agents for our area are seldom, if ever seen or heard from. We conducted an underage alcohol sales sting last year and the majority of stores sold to underage informant. More enforcement and press coverage of enforcement is needed.
- ABC must move faster on complaints.
- I would like the agent to spend more time in my town. However, I know he has a bigger area w/ more problems to cover, but still my town is important.
- Need ability to address problem establishments in a timely manner.

### Other Comments

- No contact with ABC agents in my county for over six years.
- We are a city Sheriffs office, police handle criminal activity. We assist when needed.
- Some of the deputies may have had contact with ABC agents more frequently than state in questionnaire; however, I am not familiar with all contacts. I have not been informed of any negative issues concerning the Dept. of ABC. I will take advantage of some of the services learned about in this survey. Thank You.
- Would like officer for department.
- We are very small town and have only 3 locations that sell alcohol.
- Would like to see in person a couple, three times a year for discussion of what's going on in town.
- Please note that this survey response is from the state capital police.